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## THE BRITISH DIPLOMACY ON GREECE 1943-1944.

(An Analysis based on the American archival sources and diplomatic documents)

### I

#### Foreword

The present work, like its predecessor, on the British policies in Greece during the last part of the Metaxas regime, a sequel of which it is, is based on a mass of unpublished materiel. Virtually, all the original documents of the State Department, the War Department, the Navy Department, the Office of Strategic Services, the Office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Office of National Security and all published works of value to the subject have been used.

Although in this paper I am concerned with the many facets of the British diplomacy in Greece during the period ending with the withdrawal of the Germans from Greece, I have kept my eyes fixed on Ariadne's thread - the American aspects of the Anglo - Greek clash in those years. For it will be the United States which reluctantly first at the impervious solicitations of the British will sanction and in various ways abet the British policies on Greece. And with the end of the Roosevelt era in pursuance of her new destinies it will be Washington that will carry to the bitter end the British war aims on Greece for a post - war Greece safe under the sway of the Anglo - American «sphere» of interest. In the analysis of the British diplomatic goals on Greece no effort was spared to stress the participation of the Greek political leadership at the time. A point that strikes the student of the period is the extent that those personalities effected history. An attempt has also been made to underline the motivations of those individuals, the existing socio-political conditions in Greece, thus going beyond the mere description of events. While it essentially deals with the diplomacy of the period drawing on the vast riches of the untapped American Archives it attempts to reconstruct in its proper frame one of the most fas-

inating periods of contemporary Hellenism the era of EAM, a visionary and reform-ridden period and its abrupt and sad end.

However, it must be made categorically clear as it is I trust evident, that this study is by far founded on the official American views and in that respect it presents an additional value to the student of the period since it brings to the forefront the shaping of the American policies on Greece. At times in parallel lines with the British policies and unfrequently in conflict with it, somehow gives a more balanced and objective account of the British motives and aims on Greece, and in my opinion has a splendid insight on the social forces then evolving in the country.

## II

## The Shaping of the British Plans on Greece.

The organized and disciplined<sup>1</sup> elements of the armed forces, mainly Navy, which formed the nucleus of the «new» Greek army constituted the essential power structure of the Tsouderos government. That administration exercised a nominal, to say the least, control over its «national» forces. Equipped, fed and trained by the respective British services, from the very beginning of their arrival in Egypt<sup>2</sup>, came under the operational and over all administrative control of the British Middle East Command. Their national character ceased to exist as far as operations, administration and dependency on training and supplies for their very existence was concerned for all intents and purposes being incorporated into the British forces.

On the political realm decisions affecting the policy matters of the Greek administration and its long term goals were regulated and adjusted to the projected British interests in the area. Main exponent and launching pad for the execution of the British policies on Greece were foremost the various docile Greek politicians who served as prime ministers during the time in question. It can be asserted categorically that the heads of essentially two of the three Greek administrations that spanned the period, those of Tsouderos and Papandreou, were vessels of the British designs on Greece<sup>3</sup>. Hand picket and dismissed at will were prone to British dictates in so far as the discharge of their official duties on national matters were concerned. The manifestation of this syndrome was plainly understood by all observers of the Greek scene. The Office of Strategic Services in a study on the British policies on Greece written in 1945 stated epigrammatically: «After June 1944 they

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1. In as far as the Greek armed forces are concerned, those arriving in Egypt besides the stranglers were in a state of semimutiny. On several of the naval vessels from the very beginning of their arrival at Alexandria there were mutinies and talk of returning to Greece.

2. See amongst others a telegram of the British C. - in - C. Middle East to the Foreign Office of June 17, 1941, which speaks explicitly of the control exercised by the British over the Greek armed forces. See also a telegram by the Foreign Office to Sir Michael Palaret to the extent that before even the departure of the Greek administration from Greece arrangements had been made for the placement of the Greek armed forces under the British. *Foreign Office*, 371/29816, doc. 144 and 371/29817 doc. 15.

3. The third prime minister of the period S. Venizelos lasted in power only one week. Of course, that does not mean that his case was any different from the other Greek politicians in their dependency on the British. National Archives of the United States, *Department of State*, R & A Reports. No. 2818. British Policy toward Greece 1941-1944, p. iv.

(British) completely controlled the government-in-exile through the person of Premier Papandreou, who repeatedly followed British instructions without consulting his cabinet.»<sup>1</sup> But the foundation and the corner stone of the British policies in Greece rested on the Greek monarchy, an institution which in the person of George II never failed London in its loyalty and service<sup>2</sup>. In Greece proper the destinies of the country were entrusted to a military, government, former stalwarts of the king and pillars of various military *coup d'états*, who a little earlier were instrumental in the collapse of the army. The instigators of the surrendering and the capitulation of the country to the Germans<sup>3</sup> formed the first government in the land upon the departure of the king and his cabinet. German sponsored and sustained and fully under the auspices of the German command in Greece, the government was exclusively composed by members of the military hierarchy which prior to the fall of Greece comprised the military leadership of the nation at war. The new military regime not unlike the Metaxas dictatorship was as much alien and despised by the rank and file of the Greek people as the government in exile<sup>4</sup>.

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1. *Ibid.*

2. The comments of the Department of State's OCL study on the Greek king, are indicative of his special relations with the British and the laters firm upholding of the Greek monarchy's interests: «Since the occupation of Greece and his own exile, the King has proven amenable to British counsel, even when that counsel has seemed to run counter to his own hopes and desires.» *Ibid.*, Office of Intelligence and Liaison, «Facts Relevant to an Estimate of the Policies to be Followed by King George II of Greece», p. 3.

3. The first government under Tsolakoglou, the «leading Greek Quisling» in the words of the Foreign Office, comprised a *who is who* of the Greek military hierarchy who had commanded the Greek army during the war against the axis. No surprise therefore, that the British insisted to the Greek king that he publicly disallow and repudiate them. Before he left Greece the King signed a decree cashiering, «the following senior officers for takings post from enemy and ordering their officers to do so, Major - General Tetsis, Markou, Katsimitros.» *Foreign Office*, 371/29821, doc. 4. Telegram by Sir Michael Palairt to the Foreign Office of May 5, 1941.

4. Both the «reformed» Metaxist regime brought together under Tsouderos and the German appointed military regime in Athens seemed to complement each other in their acts of repression. The Research and Analysis report 2939 of the OSS on, The Role of the Police in Greek Politics, has these lively to say about the last days of the Tsouderos' administration in Athens: «Upon the fall of Greece Maniatakis and his followers cooperated with the Germans. Immediately after General Tsolakoglou's surrender at Yiannina on April 22, 1941, which marked the end of formal resistance, Maniatakis arrested as many democratically oriented officers as could be apprehended, to prevent their leaving for Crete. Maniatakis agents de-

The pre-war political leadership in disarray and discredited seemed incapable to assert itself and rally the Greek nation at the time of crisis. Confused and expecting that the fate of the country was to be decided by the allies was bewildered and lukewarm to any idea of armed resistance to the axis. Involved in old times political conspiracies and addressing themselves to the question of the monarchy did alienate itself from the main stream of thinking of the Greek people. Indeed, while the dictatorship of Metaxas in 1936 had forcibly served to retard the growing social discontent for economic and political reforms, the fall of the country to the axis and the general paralysis followed gave a new impetus and accelerated the people's demand for immediate social changes in the old corrupt order. The betrayal by both the organized military cast and the professional politicians of the national aspirations and their compromise with the either the axis or the British left a vacuum in the country's body politic.

The task of unifying and rallying the Greek people in a struggle against the foreign aggressors and of focusing on the inevitable social reforms befell to a little known leftist groups<sup>1</sup> under the aegis of a virile

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livered these men to Gestapo. Maniatakis was made Minister of Security in the Government which Tsouderos formed immediately after Tsolakoglou's capitulation, and when that Government left Athens on April 22, 1941, Maniatakis and General Kavrakos, who was appointed military governor of the capital, remained behind «to insure law and order» until the arrival of the German troops. In the interval before their arrival Maniatakis *arrested* a number of well-known liberals, and when the Germans occupied Athens on 27 April they found these people in prison. They kept them there until the outbreak of their war against Russia when they send them to concentration camps as «suspected of communism.» German measures to round up other «communist sympathizers» were simplified by a piece of apparently intentional carelessness on the part of the Special Security. Although the secret archives of the Special Security were carefully destroyed upon evacuation, the dossiers giving full particulars of all persons suspected of sympathy with the «Communists» were left behind.» *Department of State, R & A Reports, No. 2939, pp. 4-5. Italics mine.*

1. EAM was composed, besides the Greek Communist Party, KKE, by the Union of Popular Democracy, ELD, the Socialist Party, SKE, the Agrarian Party of Vogiatzis, the Agrarian Party of Gavrielidis, the United Socialist Party, ESKE, and by the Republican Party. Of all those the ELD, whose secretary-general Elias Tsirimokos was to gain ill repute later as a renegade, was the most important of the components making up the EAM. There were also «numerous» patriotic officers and others who were not Socialists, like Askoutsis and Hajibeis. Those last two according to an OSS study were connected with Masonic circles and the newspaper publisher Lambrakis. Furthermore, according to the same study the aforesaid two liberal politicians were implanted by Lambrakis in the EAM in order to strengthen his position with the expanding power of the Greek resistance. *Ibid, Office of Strategic Servi-*

and well organized party the tenacious and aggressive communist party of Greece. This mustering under the auspices of the Greek communist party of the most virile and aggressive elements of the Greek population aiming at materializing the long sought reforms in the Greek social and economic set up gave birth to a political movement known as the EAM. And as it has been recognized the EAM «offered the country a social programme» the uniqueness of which was unparalleled in any other period of the life of the independent Greek state. The truly revolutionary changes envisioned by the EAM were bound to challenge decisively the British position in Greece. Not only was a long term threat to the entrenched British interests but an immediate menace to the conservatives and the military cast which in collaboration with the Germans was administering Greece. That a possibility was an anathema to London.

Apparently, the British have decided that a leftist or potentially leftist government, which might be expected to have political and sentimental ties with the Soviet Russia, could not be relied upon for cooperation with Great British in the same degree as a rightist government which would be largely depended on British support<sup>1</sup>.

Not unnaturally therefore, that the British engulfing those premises supported consistently the rightists centering around the person of the king. Furthermore, Britain was so categorically set on the course of identifying with the rightists that consistently opposed, violently at times, not only the leftists but also the moderates who were unwilling to accept the re-imposition in Greece of a Metaxas style regime. In doing so England precipitated in a calculated manner a violent conflict in Greece and among the Greek forces abroad, Middle East, with the main resistance organization EAM and its military arm the ELAS.

The British position was officially pronounced to London's ally the U. States early as December 1942. In a communique to the State Department the British government did express the hope that the monarchy would be reinstituted in Greece at the end of the war. If that was not fisible to be achieved as a matter of course because of internal developments, the British continued, that they would resort to all means avai-

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ces, doc. no. 114090, PIC/G/61, «A Short Guide to Greek Political Parties and Personalities», pp. 17, 27; Henose Laikes Demokratias, *Theseis gia ta Decembriana*, Athens, 1945.

1. National Archives of the United States, R & A Reports, No. 2818, British Policy toward Greece 1941-1944, p. 8.

lable «short of force»<sup>1</sup>. The administration envisioned was to include a conglomeration of liberal politicians of the type of Tsouderos who were prone to accept the primacy of the British and the restoration of the monarchy.

The spectre of a civil war coming at the heels of liberation and even much earlier was becoming apparent to all concerned. Exiled Greek politicians of the old liberal parties, most notable among them S. Venizelos made that fear known to official American circles charged with Greek affairs. In a memorandum to the State Department on January 30, 1943, the son of the former head of the liberal party the celebrated political personality of modern Greece, E. Venizelos, warned Washington of the impending civil war in Greece if the British persisted in their policy to install Tsouderos and the king as the legal government after the liberation of the land<sup>2</sup>.

For the British had inticed the formation of rival to the EAM groups with the avowed purpose as general Donovan, head of the American OSS<sup>3</sup> put it to «destroy EAM-ELAS»<sup>4</sup>. Chief among those British founded rival organizations was the EDES, a group mainly centered in the area of Epirus. The origins of EDES are imbued in the strange web of the British intrigues to dominate Greece at any cost. A State Department's study on the British policies in Greece described as follows the creation of EDES:

In 1942, according to a credible source, a British

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1. *Ibid.* Department of State, 868.01/333-1/4. Memorandum to the State Department by Mr. Henry Hopkinson, secretary to the British Minister of State at Cairo of October 12, 1942. See also the annotated comments of a functionary of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs of the Department of State.

2. In that memorandum Venizelos had called upon the State Department to bring about the legal overthrow of the Tsouderos-King regime hinting on the need to establish in Greece a republic in the place of the monarchy. It is worth noticing that in a memorandum which the same had submitted a few months earlier to Lord Halifax, while he did denounce Tsouderos and in the most explicit manner condemned the role played by the king in the establishment of the Metaxas dictatorship, he did not advocate the abolition of the monarchy, apparently bowing to the British susceptibilities. *Ibid.*

3. «The political situation has changed this (end of 1943) and now it is the proposed policy of the British to attempt to build up the E.D.E.S. group in opposition to the E.A.M. group which is to be starved of supplies and attacked on the propaganda front.» Memorandum by General Donovan to the Joint Chiefs of Staff of November 26, 1943. *Ibid.*, RG 319, Records of the Army Staff.

4. *Ibid.*

agent who had twice given Zervas<sup>1</sup> money to operate a guerrilla band was able to induce Zervas to move only by threatening to inform the Germans that Zervas was in the pay of the British<sup>2</sup>.

EDES political orientation was conservative and with British guidance had participated in efforts to suppress the EAM. The same was true of the other minor organizations chief among which was EK-KA. The most notorious of the British organized groups was the so called Khi (X). Not surprisingly, the Khi was originally a creation of the Germans and more especially by the SS. «All of its members were equipped with identity cards furnished by the quisling Special Security organization. Their equipment was supplemented from funds contributed by groups surrounding the King.»<sup>3</sup>

Khi had signed an undertaking with the British to put all of its forces at the disposal of the allies upon the liberation of the country by the Germans. Consequently, Khi was strengthened with British arms and ammunition<sup>4</sup>. A similar group but more closely identified with the Germans was the PAO centered in northern Greece, Macedonia. It openly collaborated with the Germans in operations against the EAM to such an extent as to form an integral part of the German formations and the majority of its members preferred to retreat with the German army when the latter evacuated Greece than to stay in the country.

One whose disrepute exceeded by far all similar organizations and whose abysmal cruelty and crimes against the non-combatants were only equalled by those of the genocide practising German storm troopers, were the euphemistically called Security Battalions, or the Quisling Security Battalions<sup>5</sup>. Those formations founded by the Quisling government of Rhalles with the explicit collaboration of the Germans and staffed by both German and Greek regular army officers «had as its avowed purpose to combat communism, which the promoters of the

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1. A shady character of ill-repute amongst the Greek officers corp who was to gain later greater notoriety as an outright instrument of the British in Greece.

2. *Ibid.* R & A Reports, No. 2818, British Policy toward Greece 1941-1944, p. 13.

3. *Ibid.* p. 14.

4. *Ibid.* Office of Strategic Services, doc. no. L 51531 of December 28, 1944.

5. See a study of the OSS Research and Analysis Branch, entitled, The Greek Security Battalions. *Ibid.* 093.3 Z 1092, 2165. «They were said to be men of the lowest type, more inhuman than the Germans.» *Ibid.* p. 4.



Security Battalions equate with EAM»<sup>1</sup>.

They assert that it (growth) is due to Rallis propaganda which insists that the Greek and the British governments want the Rallis troops and that Tsouderos' denunciations were a blind. This was the line taken by Dertylis at a meeting of 300 regular officers in the Ministry of National Defence. Dertylis was seconded by Pangalos and Gonatas. A speech of the German General Schimana on the occasion of Hitler's birthday supported this view. Schimana declared that all officers must support the Germans against communism and that the British agree, as would become manifest very shortly<sup>2</sup>.

What the German general was so plainly declaring, and indeed was to be overwhelmingly manifested by the end of 1944, was not unknown to the American services in the Middle East and the State Department. The historian William L. Langer serving in the OSS in a report on the Security Battalions wrote: «Furthermore, when the Security Battalions were being organized recruiting officers openly declared that they were being formed with the approval of the British. When some of their numbers were taken captive they wept when they were told that what they were doing was contrary to the wishes of the Allies... it is certain that some of their liaison officers (British) made use of them.»<sup>3</sup>

Closely identified with the Security Battalions and at times almost undistinguishable from them was the police. The legacy of the Metaxas dictatorship where all branches of the police service had been employed to make its tenure secure and had become the main instrument of control and repression was to continue under the Quisling governments. The security police founded by Metaxas and which was modeled after Gestapo, indeed Himler himself directed the training and the organization of that force<sup>4</sup>, upon the capitulation of Greece cooperated with

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1. *Ibid.* Report of Dr. William L. Langer to the OSS headquarters in the Middle East of July 21, 1944. Doc. no. 88922.

2. *Ibid.* The Greek Security Battalions, p. 3.

3. *Ibid.* OSS doc. 88922. Report by Dr. William L. Langer.

4. *Ibid.* R & A Reports, No. 2939, The Role of the Police in Greek Politics, pp. 3-4. To sum up the psychology of the police cadres as it had evolved during the Metaxas era is worth reading the comments of an Australian visiting Greece at the time and who made a point of making a study of the most obnoxious aspects of the Metaxas regime, the concentration camps: «At present there are no progressive peo-

the Germans. The anti-communist bias upon which the Greek police and the security one had flourished, during the country's occupation found an outlet in a fierce hostility toward the EAM<sup>1</sup>. In October of 1943, both the police and the gendarmerie were placed under the direct command of the SS general Stroop. Not long after the number of the police forces increased with the creation of the so-called «model» battalions of the gendarmes. «It was made increasingly clear that the principal function of the augmented Gendarmerie was to operate against ELAS the military branch of the EAM»<sup>2</sup>.

The ground then was well suited for an armed confrontation in Greece. The armed clash erupted in the autumn of 1943, the signal being the withdrawal of British support from the EAM, on a preconceived plan, and the immediate and expeditious reinforcement of EAM's rival organizations which the British missions in Greece had methodically brought into being.

The prospects of a protracted civil war in Greece did cause grave concern in the United States. Both the State Department and the military chiefs were worried that the civic war which was raging not only in Greece but also in Yugoslavia was providing a respite to the German army in the area, thus weakening the allied effort to «embarrass the Germans on their Mediterranean front»<sup>3</sup>. Without attributing dire-

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ple in the police force; any that there were were thrown out long ago. All the police have a special psychology: they feel that they are enemies of the people, they are taught so, they have a professional conscience against the people. The police and the gendarmerie are recruited from the more fascist strata and corrupted». Bert Birtles *Exile in the Aegean*, London, 1937, p. 149.

1. «In the Special Security the Germans found more willing co-operation. Police Colonel Polychronopoulos, who had been an intimate collaborator of Maniada-kis, continued his function under the Germans, and under the first quisling government of General Tsolakoglou arrested 2,300 persons and lodged them in concentration camps....The Greek police were a distinct group, alienated from the generality of the population, and were by training and inclination hostile to the elements from whom subversive activities against the German occupation might be anticipated. Consequently the Germans, immediately upon their occupation, allowed the police to function even delegating to them the control of identity, for which the cards which had been in use under the Metaxas regime continued to be employed...The Germans relieved themselves of the odium of disagreeable and unpopular house arrests by employing Greek police for the purpose...» National Archives of the United States, Department of State, R & A Reports, No. 2939, The Role of the Police in Greek Politics, pp. 5-6.

2. *Ibid.* p. 7.

3. *Ibid.* Memorandum by general Marshall to general Handy of October 20, 1943.

etly to London the cause of the fratricidal war the American military was conscious of the fact and the role played by the British SOE in fomenting that state of affairs. General Marshall in consultation with admiral Leahy, president Roosevelt's chief of staff pioneered the bold proposal of a direct American intervention to bring about a cessation of the fighting, and if possible a reconciliation. The avowed purpose, of course, being the resumption of operations against the Germans. The only reservation being that such an American presence could have raised a public clamor to move American forces in the Balkans<sup>1</sup>.

Washington in essence was seeking means to alter if not modify the British policy in at least its most ruthless aspects. President Roosevelt without withdrawing his support of the broader and well defined British claims in the Balkans was whole heartily behind general Marshall's and the military's desire for an American presence in the Balkans to contain the civil war. General Donovan, on the president's recommendation was to be despatched to the Balkans without informing the British before hand so as to emphasize the independence of the American policy in the area and to prevent probably any British objections. What the Joint Chiefs of Staff were thinking was the creation of a kind of supranational authority to coordinate allied policies on the spot in the Balkans. However, in essence to oversee the activities of the SOE, curbing the most onerous and provocative planks of the British policies. President Roosevelt in his message to Churchill drafted along the lines suggested by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, was categorical of the extent of the authorities to be accorded to Donovan in case that London was to consent to his mission: «If we decide to send him in all agencies of ours working now in the Balkans should be placed under his direction and the resources we put into this effort should be at his disposal»<sup>2</sup>.

The coordination envisioned by the Americans was as impractical as it was impossible. British interests in Greece were so interwoven with the survival, upkeep and strengthening of the marginal organizations, the rivals to EAM-ELAS, that anything short of their wholehearted augmentation was incoceivable to British policy makers. The fomentation of an armed confrontation to crush EAM as the decisive factor in Greek politics for years to come, which was to be eliminated if

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1. *Ibid.* Memorandum by general Handy to general Marshall of October 20, 1943.

2. *Ibid.* Message of president Roosevelt to prime minister of October 20, 1943.

president Roosevelt's proposals were to be taken at face value, was to be the crowning of the British policies in the area. Not surprisingly, therefore, that the «Donovan mission» was grounded before it started, the prime minister, according to a British historian rejecting it «politely but smartly»<sup>1</sup>.

Determined to avoid being caught at the wake of the brewing storm the Joint Chiefs of Staff delegated general Donovan to make an in depth study of the developments in the Balkans and to offer his recommendations. Two weeks after the telegram to prime minister had gone from Washington Donovan submitted his findings which in no uncertain terms put squarely on the British followed policies the blame for the uproar in the Balkans. For, according to the general, it was not military consideration the guiding principle which set Britain's policies in the area.

The policy of dealing with the situation has been directed by the considered long-range political necessity of the British in the Balkans rather than the immediate and vital military problem here or in relation to over-all Allied operations<sup>2</sup>.

The British agents in Greece under uniform and ostensibly under SOE orders were in reality representatives of the Foreign Office, responsive to it and carrying its policies. The Greek government had been systematically ignored in its attempts to communicate with the indigenous movements and in turn the guerrillas had been denied representation in the allied headquarters or by their respective government in exile. In Greece, the British retained in the field 145 agents while in the whole of Yugoslavia, both by Mihailovitch and Tito 113 and the corresponding number of the American OSS agents were 11 for Greece and 9 in Yugoslavia<sup>3</sup>.

The tremendous expansion of the EAM in conjunction with the mistrust of the British because of its independence and political program forced those British representatives in occupied Greece to seek means

1. E. Barker, *British Policy in South-East Europe in the Second World War*, London, 1976, p. 119.

2. Memorandum to the Joint Chiefs of Staff by the director of the OSS general Donovan of November 26, 1943. National Archives of the United States, RG 319, Records of the Army Staff. ABC 091.411 Greece-Yugo (27 Nov. 43) Sec. 1.

3. *Ibid.* p. 2.

to destroy it. The British, the general continued, were building up EDES «in opposition to the EAM group which is to be starved of supplies and attacked on the propaganda front»<sup>1</sup>. Being quite concerned about what they had considered to be their exclusive field of operations the British had meticulously precluded the OSS «from all meetings of S.O.E., not only dealing with the internal political problems of these countries but from a consideration of all plans and operations and air and sea priorities...»<sup>2</sup>.

To ameliorate that state of affairs the head of the OSS advanced the view that a joint SOE-OSS operations committee be established and above all that the emphasis should be placed on the military rather than on the political as the case had been up to then. A recommendation which was not destined under the circumstances to be adopted by the British and even the Americans would tacitly ignore, was an invitation to the Soviet Union to participate along with the Anglo-Americans in overseeing the feuding guerrillas in the Balkans<sup>3</sup>. Another point raised was that the organizations should be invited to send their authorized representatives in Cairo so a liaison be maintained, a common policy adopted but primarily to exercise a control over them.

The intelligent, practical and suited to the war needs in the Balkans abhorptions of the OSS were bound to be doomed because of the intransigence of the British leading to a head on collision with the EAM. Donovan's memorandum was accompanied by a detailed report on Greece, furnished by the on the spot representatives of the OSS, which demonstrated the futility of the American initiative, depicting with accuracy the true dimensions of the problem.

EAM was a power to reckon with, deeply rooted in the country engulfing «the support of good people all over Greece». It was a dynamic, imaginative, fighting organization from the beginning encompassing, clerks, laborers, women and people of all strata of the Greek society. «Members organized strikes, printed clandestine papers by the dozen, went off to fight, stayed home to commit sabotage in cities; it was not just talk, it was fanatical devotion, and many died heroic deaths»<sup>4</sup>.

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1. *Ibid*, p. 5.

2. Because of American protests, «a frank statement to S.O.E.» there was a marked change in the British attitude toward the OSS representatives in Greece. However, it was rather superficial since the Americans did not possess any power to implement policies contrary to those advanced by the British.

3. *Ibid*, p. 6.

4. *Ibid*. Appendix «D» *Inside Greece*, p. 49.

Its influence had extended far and wide with astonishing results. «While other Greeks talked, EAM organizers spread over the country and into the islands; everywhere there was a mushroom growth.»<sup>1</sup> Its military branch the ELAS had close to 30,000 troops out of a possible 35,000 guerrillas, those last, with the EDES being «small, and largely disbanded». That force contained in Greece about 144,000 Germans and some 87,000 Bulgarians all in all «about 3 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>5</sub> German divisions and 4 Bulgarian which otherwise would be used elsewhere.»<sup>2</sup> The military might was a byproduct of a firmly entrenched organization which enjoyed the unreserved allegiance of almost «a majority » of the inhabitants of Greece. EAM had roots everywhere and the report concluded that it could not «be ripped up and tossed away.»

Any policy to be imposed on the country from the outside would inevitably meet the stiff opposition of the EAM-ELAS. The pre-conceived and continuously advanced British aims to control Greece for strategic reasons would come to fruition by the establishment in the country of a Greek government under London's control<sup>2</sup>. The means through which to achieve this was the restoration of the Greek monarchy, an idea repugnant to all and something which the EAM had repeatedly and in the most unambiguous terms had stated its abhorrence to it.

The awkwardness of the British position was to be remedied by organizing an armed opposition to EAM-ELAS within Greece and by a propaganda campaign abroad depicting the latter as responsible for the civil war in Greece and of persecuting its opponents<sup>3</sup>.

Depicting the EAM-ELAS in this favorable light, was not but a reflection of the hard reality which, of course, did not prevent the OSS's agents to characterize EAM-ELAS as «communist-led organization.»<sup>4</sup>

1. *Ibid*, p. 49.

2. «Policy from outside has been, *in effect* - that is, has seemed to the Greeks to consist in saying - «Greece shall freely choose whatever form of government she wishes, provided she chooses monarchy under George II.» *Ibid*, p. 53.

3. «In October Churchill read reports of ELAS attacks on other groups and of the killing of a British officer. Angered, he wrote to Selborne, the minister in charge of S.O.E. and to the Foreign Office: EAM and ELAS should be starved and struck at by every means in our power. But I fear these means are small. » Elizabeth Barker, *Churchill and Eden at War*, pp. 185-186.

4. The following comments are characteristic of the OSS's prejudices concerning the political orientation of the EAM and the communist party: «Everyone says: The Greek is not naturally a communist But: «Communist» no longer means «Marxian socialist». «Communist» now means «one who follows the party line:

Rooting out communism, in their view, would be desirable but the fact that the EAM-ELAS had the endorsement of «good people all over Greece» made such a task beyond the reach of the British at the time.

The political aspects of the problem did not impress on the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the desirability to make any recommendations on that issue, although that constituted the hard core of the imbroglio. Nevertheless, and acting on the basis of conclusions reached at the Cairo and the Teheran<sup>1</sup> conferences the Joint Chiefs of Staff, to the probable surprise of Donovan, they were going to intensify the allied support «to the Balkan patriots», apparently with no regard to the commitments and long range goals of the British in the area. All operations including those of the OSS and the SOE were to be under the auspices of the allied Commander in Chief Mediterranean area, an American<sup>2</sup>.

Plausible as they were the military needs, the political considerations took precedence no matter the exhortations of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The Foreign Office was utterly impervious to any such military commitments, the basic dogma being the decimation of the EAM and the establishment in Greece of the monarchy. American displeasures were simply brushed aside or disregarded. The State Department no less than the American military questioned the high handed methods of London but to no avail since nothing could be done to shake the prerogatives long enjoyed by the British over Greece:

The British have shown a distinct disposition to regard the Greek political field as their private preserve.

They have informed us that their policy is to take steps to strengthen the personal position of the King and to return him to Greece. They did not seek our views before adopting this policy, and have not consulted us on other Greek matters<sup>3</sup>.

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one who is, in effect, a Russian outside Russia». In this sense many Greeks are «communists». National Archives of the United States, RG 319, Records of the Army Staff. ABC 091.411 Greece-Yugo (27 Nov. 43) Sec. 1.

1. «It was agreed at the EUREKA Conference that our support of the Patriots in the Balkans, which now falls within the area in which you are responsible for Allied operations, should be intensified in order to increase their effectiveness.» *Ibid.* Appendix «C», p. 6.

2. *Ibid.* Memorandum of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of December 27, 1943 to general Donovan.

3. *Ibid.* Department of State, 868. 01/350-1/2 PS/KN. Memorandum of Mr. Murray to the Secretary of State of May 15, 1943.

A new and a dramatic change in the Greco-British relations marks the fall months of 1943 an augury of things to come. At the Quebec Conference of August 1943 attended by Roosevelt and Churchill the president reluctantly but explicitly endorsed the British schemes on Greece. The United States government was not to «take any different position» from what London could consider as the proper policies, i.e. the undermining by all means available of the EAM<sup>1</sup>. Boldened by this affirmation of Britain's special position the prime minister assured George II of the unqualified support of his government. «We are all looking forward to your return to Greece at the head of Your army and remaining there until the will of the Greek people is expressed under conditions of tranquility»<sup>2</sup>.

British confidence that they could «make or break» the EAM by espousing the cause of the defunct monarchy was to suffer a draw back at the same Quebec conference. The American Joint Chiefs of Staff on purely military criteria had vetoed Churchill's plans for a new front in the Balkans. Consequently, no sizeable British forces could be employed for the «liberation» of Greece, thus bringing to a standstill the operation to establish in the country a government subservient to the British.

That was not the only misfortune that was to happen to the British plans. The civil war fanned and instigated by the Foreign Office was going badly for Britain's proxy the EDES. The massive aid in materiel notwithstanding, and the corresponding blockade of the EAM, ELAS was able to deliver hard blows to the nationalist bands of Zervas who constantly retreated in the sheltered area of Epirus. New devices were now to be employed, diplomacy to bring EAM to its knees. The new proposals provided for the institution of a council of regency headed by a regent who at the time of liberation of the country from the Germans would have assumed the legal government of Greece. At the same time George II would have sanctioned the new policy by declaring that he would not have returned to Greece «unless such conditions have been established as will allow him to function as a constitutional monarch.»<sup>3</sup>

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1. *Ibid.* Minutes of the meeting at the citadel in Quebec of August 22, 1943.

2. *Ibid.* Report of the American ambassador Mr. Kirk to the Secretary of State of September 25, 1943.

3. *Ibid.* Department of State, 868.01/428 PS/HWL. Despatch by the American ambassador MacVeagh to the Secretary of State of December 23, 1943, transmitting in toto the text of a British document entitled «Main talking points with the King of the Hellenes.»



The royal moderation was a sophisticated manoeuvre to isolate the EAM from the main body of the Greek moderates, the heart of its strength, rallying them instead to the cause of the traditional political parties and the king. Additionally, that scheme could have given the much needed excuse to Zervas to hail the new compromise as truly safeguarding the constitutional rights of the Greek people, thus asking for the immediate incorporation of his forces in the governmental regular army; an army whose loyalty was thoroughly royalist and pro-British.

The army of the government in exile, the officers corp, while at the beginning when the new army nucleus was formed by the British in Egypt was an agglomeration of vexing «political, social and economic» attitudes, when it became evident that the British had identified with the monarchy against the left, represented by the EAM, the officers corp was to be characterized by a major dichotomy of right and left.

This major cleavage in the officers corp, as far as the right was concerned, was best epitomized by the general Ventiris' conduct of ethics for all those officers opposed to the reforms in the Greek social order as envisioned by the EAM. For those officers remaining in occupied Greece the proper course of action would be the following:

- (1) Dissapproval of armed bodies organized to resist the invaders and of any violent measures against them...
- (2) Organization by officers of a military league which would appear on the political stage immediately after liberation;
- (3) This league would assume authority to appoint a government which would retain power for two years to restore order...<sup>1</sup>

The officers clustered around Ventiris, mainly those in the Middle East were organized along the familiar pre-war pressure groups of the Greek army officers corp the well-known Leagues. The right-wing officers league was to become known as the League of Junior Officers (Syndesmos Axiomatikon Neon). The league known briefly as SAN was advocating the idea that what Greek forces there were in the Middle East should be retained intact well trained and armed to be used for the establishment of a conservative government in the country after the liberation. An identical but greatly less substantial in number

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1. *Ibid.* The Role of the Army in Greek Politics, p. 10.

but not in prestige and the power it yielded was the league of officers known as *Ierarchia*<sup>1</sup>. Organized and led by the senior officers in the service of the government in exile they advocated the royalist causes and instigated massive disobedience in the ranks of their fellow officers to any measures destined to liberalize the policies of the government over the issue of the monarchy or the EAM. In that they enjoyed the active support of the British army which sided with them in the frequent clashes that they had incited with republican minded officers.

Republicans and EAM sympathizers in the armed forces had their own counterpart organization the ASO (*Antifasistiki Stratiotiki Organosis*, Antifascist Military Organization), as far as the army was concerned, and similar organizations in the Navy and the Air Force<sup>2</sup>. Their declared goal was «to prevent our forces from being used some day as unconscious instruments for the oppression of the Greek people at the hands of a few opportunist politicians and soldiers.»<sup>3</sup>

The last movement in the armed forces like its counterpart in Greece with which it sympathized and in fact was politically identified, the EAM in contrast with the SAN and the *Ierarchia* was strongly advocating the idea that the Greek armed forces should be used in the war against the Axis. Not unlike the EAM in Greece the ASO commanded if not the majority of the officers corp at least the loyalties of the rank and file of the enlisted personnel sharing their beliefs that the question of the monarchy should be held in abeyance until the liberation of the country, and that a more representative government should be formed in Cairo to reflect the political realities in Greece.

Apprehension voiced by the British about the «unreliability» of the Greek armed forces and the growing conflict with the royalist officers provoked in the summer of 1943 full scale mutinies that had to be contained by large scale use of the British military. Early in 1944 ASO officers with the encouragement and connivance of liberal politicians

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1. «The League of Senior Officers formed the *Ierarchia* or Secret Administration and cooperated with SAN in propagandizing the royalist cause against the leftist organizations, which they sought to have disbanded» *Ibid*, p. 11.

2. *Ibid*.

3. *Ibid*. The American military attache, according to ambassador MacVeagh had made this report about the way the British were treating the Greek armed forces: «What really threatens to render the Greek troops finally and completely useless as allies is the way they have been treated and still are treated, and the surest way to cure their ingrowing troubles is to give them a change somewhere and somewhere to be worthwhile.» Records of the Office of Strategic Services, doc. no. 56, 900. Despatch by Mr. MacVeagh to the Secretary of State of January 6, 1944.

Venizelos and Carapanayiotis staged a *coup d'état* demanding that Tsouderos resign and a new government be established so broad as to «include representatives of the Greeks who had remained within the country.»<sup>1</sup> What the ASO was driving at was the formation of a national government composed of representatives of the traditional liberal parties and members of the provisional government that the EAM had created along with other organizations in Greece proper.

Known as PEEA the Greek government in the liberated Greek territories was determined to come to an understanding with the Tsouderos, administration and its British sponsors rather than to seek to monopolize authority in Greece. Its compromisal attitude was exhibited in its proposals to Tsouderos in Cairo:

Cooperation of the Cairo and Karpenisi Governments in the immediate formation of a government in which all parties would be represented.

The settlement of the question of the King's return by the immediate appointment of a Regent acceptable to all parties and to EAM...

The appointment as Commander-in-Chief of all Greek forces of a military man acceptable to all parties and to EAM.

General Othonaios was proposed, and two other names suggested<sup>2</sup>.

PEEA's offer for collaboration with the hardly popular administration of Tsouderos, in the traditional Greek way, was conveyed by a committee of officers who knowing the authority exercised by the British had he «customary consultation» with the British ambassador Mr. Leeper, who immediately after had the petitioners summarily arrested. This along with the dilatory tactics employed by Tsouderos incited widespread unrest in all branches of the Greek armed forces. Tsouderos was forced to resign and Venizelos was installed by the armed forces

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1. *Ibid.* doc. no. 80, 514. Despatch by Mr. MacVeagh to the Secretary of State of June 13, 1944. «As Mr. Tsouderos himself has related the conversation to me, the delegation above mentioned (a delegation of army officers) demanded that the Government...and especially that it should recognize the Political Committee of National Liberation (PEEA) recently set up« in the mountains» and now functioning there as a kind of Government.»

2. *Ibid.* doc. no. 69, 457. Report of Burton Berry, American Consul General in Istanbul to the Secretary of State of April 15, 1944.

as the new premier<sup>1</sup> only to be dismissed<sup>2</sup> by the British a few days later when he had to suffer the odium of bearing hard upon his allies on the explicit command of the British military authorities. «In the meantime, while the organization of these successful operations was being arranged, the British Ambassador had reached the conclusion that Mr. Venizelos was not a strong personality to hold the premiership at so disturbed a time, and, as a result of a conference between the two held on April 23rd, at which the Ambassador appears to have been somewhat pressing, Mr. Venizelos resigned his office...»<sup>3</sup>

His British replacement was George Papandreou whom the British had especially smuggled out of Greece. Mr. Papandreou had had special relations with the British intelligence in whose home he was taken as soon as the British had landed him at Smyrna<sup>4</sup>. «He (Papandre-

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1. «For a short period the Liberal Venizelos, who is, however, frequently described as weak, was Premier, but was virtually dismissed by the British Ambassador.» *Ibid.* R & A Reports, No. 2818, British Policy toward Greece 1941-1944. p. 20.

2. Not only Venizelos was dismissed by the British but his close colleagues in his cabinet like minister of the Army Karapanayiotis, were exiled by the British: «It was decided by the British authorities that Karapanayiotis, former War Minister, and Bodosakis Athanasiaides, the munitions manufacturer and industrialist, would be better outside Egypt, where there are centers of troublemaking. An order for their exile from Egypt was therefore issued.» *Ibid.* Records of the Office of Strategic Services, doc. no. 71, 315, of April 29, 1944.

3. It seems that Venizelos' intentions were to form an administration as limited as possible pending the inclusion of personalities coming from occupied Greece that is from EAM. He wanted to have a non-political government. «Nevertheless, it is known that the British Ambassador had already told the King that Mr. Venizelos must be eliminated as soon as possible. It is also known that the British Embassy was strongly backing Mr. Papandreou as his successor. On Saturday, 22 April, Venizelos learned that a long report on the political views of Papandreou had been sent to London by the British Ambassador, and that the British Embassy was strongly in favor of a new government, to be headed by Papandreou. The full content of the conversation is not known; but the Ambassador confirmed to Mr. Venizelos that the British Government was in favor of a Papandreou Government. Venizelos, angry and hurt, announced to the Ambassador that he would resign.» *Ibid.*, p. 2.

4. The American consul general at Istanbul had received a message from Papandreou as soon as he landed in Smyrna to the effect that he «wished to be in touch with the American Government but could not do so as he had undertaken the obligation not to make his presence known...The person who brought the message said that Mr. Papandreou was very reserved in his statements as it was important that the exact nature of his mission should not be known in advance of his arrival in Cairo». *Ibid.* doc. no. 69, 457 of April 15, 1944.

ou) had not participated in resistance movements in Greece, and was charged by his leftist opponents with having maintained contacts with quisling politicians. In Cairo it was said by his enemies that he had been «sold» to the British by his secretary Vassiliadis, who had been in British employ.»<sup>1</sup> The moderate politician Kanellopoulos enraged at the way Venizelos had been displaced told the latter that «he had a moral obligation to remain in office, since Prime Ministers of Greece are not to be chosen or appointed by the British Embassy»<sup>2</sup>.

The strong tactics and coercive pressure applied by the British to force on indignant Greek politicians London's choice, Mr. Papandreou were best illustrated by the following account of the back-room deliberations of the British officials with resisting Greek politicians:

On Monday night at 9:30 Exindaris and Kanellopoulos were asked to go to see the British Ambassador. Mr. Leeper told them that Greece was in danger; that the Slavic threat to Greece was serious; that Greece had need of a strong government headed by a strong man: that such a man was to be found in Mr. Papandreou; that Mr. Churchill personally was strongly in favor of a Papandreou government; and that Greece, if it took the proper action and formed a strong government, could count on all possible British, and also, no doubt, American support<sup>3</sup>.

### III

#### The Rising of the United State's Preponderance.

American tolerance, Roosevelt in a reply to Churchill's «blatant» announcement of the British suppression of all vestiges of Greece's sovereignty, congratulated him on restoring law and order among the «feuding Greeks», contrasted sharply with the Soviet attitude. The Soviets had registered their disapproval of the British repression publicly. Indeed, as soon as the governmental change had become a reality and while the dependence of Venizelos on the British and the king was a hindrance to the demands for a representative Greek government including Eami-

1. *Ibid.* R & A Reports, No. 2818, British Policy toward Greece 1941-1944, p. 20.

2. *Ibid.* Records of the Office of Strategic Services, doc. no. 71, 315, of April 29, 1944. See also the following comments: «Karapanayiotis suggested that Kanellopoulos should undertake to form a government. This angered Kanellopoulos, who replied that it was no longer a question of politics, but one of moral obligation on the part of the Venizelos Government to stay in office.» Records of the Office of Strategic Services, doc. no. 71, 315, of April 29, 1944.

3. *Ibid.*

tes, the Greek armed forces had revolted for a second time in a matter of a few days. Not a limited *coup d'état* by the officers corp but a wholesale revolt of the rank and file of the enlisted men of the Greek armed forces of the kind never before known in the Greek military annals.

A massive outburst of indignation against the most insolent disregard of all vestiges of Greece's right to deal with its own affairs by the British had swept the Greek armed forces. «The mutiniers were suppressed by the British with some bloodshed, and their leaders were brought to trial before courtmartial.»<sup>1</sup> According to authorotative sources some ten thousand were put in concentration camps in Africa «untill well after the liberation, in which they naturally had no part.»<sup>2</sup> The British had enforced a rigid censorship and did all they could to prevent the news of the revolt from getting abroad with a relative success. The only exception being the Tass reports for which the British embassy became so incensed at the «outrageous» nature of it that it appealed to London.

To the British, Soviet action was edging on intervention on what was considered as their own exclusive preserve. The British ambassador Mr. Leeper on April 22nd had confined to Mr. MacVeagh that the Russian broadcasts critisizing British action was not only an interference but by far had wider implications. The Greek armed revolution and its demands «could no longer be considered an internal matter.»<sup>3</sup> Apprehension was expressed whether such a Russian action was a prelude to a Russian movement to challenge the British dominance in the country. Contrary to what Mr. Leeper was voicing publicly that Greece was in danger of moving «into the Russian orbit and loose her independence», Britain was fearfull least that the EAM with Russian encouragment undo what London so copiously and meticouly had so far achieved in the promotion of her interests.

Churchill took the matter directly with Moscow calling on Molotov to «restrain» the Tass reports on the Greek situation. Reminding the Soviets of his special interests on Greece he sought to allure them to cooperation by assurances that Britain considered the Soviet Union as the predominant power in Rumania. Molotov's responce was mild as-

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1. *Ibid.* R & A Reports, No. 3745, The Role of the Army in Greek Politics, p. 12.

2. *Ibid.* R & A Reports, No. 2818, British Policy toward Greece 1941-1944, p. 21.

3. *Ibid.* doc. no. 80, 514. Despache by Mr. MacVeagh to the Secretary of State of June 13, 1944.

sureing Churchill that the Soviet news media would be «instructed to exercise greater care in the verification of its reports»<sup>1</sup>. Churchill in his thanking note deliberately now emphasized his policies of spheres of influence in the Balkans somehow assigning Rumania to the Soviet orbit, evidently to mollify any Russian objections over British policies on Greece. Molotov while not repudiating the idea of a British protectorate over Greece he condemned the actions of the British ridiculing the idea that London could have expected Russian applause for the stampeding of the Greek liberties. «The British government, wrote Molotov, controls Greek affairs and the Greek government in the most direct manner; the Soviet government could not then accept any responsibility for Greek affairs or Greek action.»<sup>2</sup>

The presidential benevolence and acquiescence contrasted with the practice of the American military establishment and the State Department in the application of the British schemes on Greece. The War Department as early as September 18, 1943, had advised the State Department that the American army disclaimed any responsibility for any commitments to British originated policies in the Balkans:

The present policy of the War Department with regard to civil affairs in the Balkans is that unless and until the Combined Chiefs of Staff reach a decision on U. S. Army participation in the accomplishment of military operations in the area, the War Department will take no responsibility for planning for the establishment or the administration of military government, including civilian supply in the area<sup>3</sup>.

Not to be undertaken by the events, the State Department, with the approval of the president, «as regards the planning of political and economic aspects of prospective military operations in the Balkan area, the Department has proposed to the British Government... that United States political and economic representatives be named to the Ad-

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1. *Ibid.*

2. Barker, *Churchill and Eden at War*, p. 277.

3. The War Department furthermore, was eager to call the attention of the State Department on the necessity to avoid making any commitments to the British on that score. *Ibid.* Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs. O.P.D. 311.23 CAD-Section X (cases 533-586). Memorandum to Commanding General U.S. Army Forces in the Middle East by J. A. Ulloa Major - General, General Staff, of September 18, 1943.

ministration of Territories (Balkans) Committee in Cairo<sup>1</sup>.» Those representatives would, under the direction of the Department of State, participate in the execution of plans in the various Balkan countries, Greece and Yugoslavia, with full authority to carry out the American policies. For the position of the political representative the Department recommended MacVeagh whom it also nominated as the American ambassador by the Greek government in exile in Cairo<sup>2</sup>.

Mr. MacVeagh was duly appointed the new American ambassador on September 29, 1943, and from the very beginning urged a greater participation by the United States in Greece. In a letter to president Roosevelt of February 17, 1944<sup>3</sup>, Mr. MacVeagh much concerned with the unilateral actions of the British on Greece which tended to serve only the British interests while associating the United States in the minds of the Greeks with them<sup>4</sup>, boldly proposed that the United States should participate militarily in any British campaign to liberate the Balkans. If that was not feasible, the assignment of large number of troops, he was of the opinion «that the command should be American»<sup>5</sup>.

MacVeagh's personal suggestion to the president was not but a continuation of a previous message that the ambassador had transmitted to the State Department along the same lines. The War Department's position on that was disappointing as far as Mr. MacVeagh would have thought. Secretary Henry L. Stimson of the War Department in full agreement with the Joint Chiefs of Staff had precluded any large military engagements by U.S. forces, even of the scale recommended by the State Department that «some combined military aspect be given to the matter of the distribution of civil supplies in the Balkans during the initial period...»<sup>6</sup> It was the unanimous opinion of the military that

1. *Ibid.* Letter by James Dunn of the State Department to Major - General Hilldring, Chief, Civil Affairs Division, Office of the Chief of Staff, War Department of September 24, 1943.

2. Memorandum to the President by the Department of State of September 24, 1943.

3. John Iatrides, *Ambassador MacVeagh Reports: Greece, 1933-1947*, Princeton, 1980, pp. 451-456.

4. «It is America and Britain together who are universally regarded as being responsible for what are actually purely British actions, and unless we do something to correct this misinterpretation, we may expect it to continue.» *Ibid.* p. 454.

5. *Ibid.* p. 455.

6. National Archives of the United States, Records of the War Department, General and Special Staffs. O.P.D. 336 Security II (cases 18-45). Memorandum to the President by the Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson of March 6, 1944.



the «United States Army participation should be confined to the participation of some twenty five American officers who would aid in the distribution of civil relief.»<sup>1</sup>

The other point raised by Mr. MacVeagh, the placing of an American commander in charge of an operation conducted mainly by British forces, was rejected as unfisible. The American military hierachy thought of the measure as detrimental to the American interests since such a commander would lack any significant authority in the direction of the operations, and the Americans as quite soundly as Mac Veagh had observed to the president, associating in that way with the British could be made the scapegoats for the British policies in Greece. Conclusively, the War Department in a memorandum to the president was of the opinion that nothing should be done which could involve the United States forces in the Balkans, which from the military point of view was an insignificant war theater.

MacVeagh had won over to his project and the commanding general of the U.S. army forces in the Middle East general Royce<sup>2</sup>. The general on March 1, 1944, raised the question with the American general staff in Washington of the participation of U.S. personnel «in high and low level committees to consider policies and the coordinated planning and execution of the Balkan civil affairs.»<sup>3</sup> That, of course, could have started an avalance with the American forces becoming increasigly the means of enforcing the British policies in the Balkans. General Marshall was in his responce to general Royce very candid and categorical about the limit and the extent of the army's participation in the British projected operations in the Balkans: «For this purpose the US army will make available approximately twenty five US officers and no, repeat no enlisted personnel now on duty in the north Africa theater of operations...»<sup>4</sup>

General Wilson<sup>5</sup> of the British forces in the Middle East and the

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1. *Ibid.*

2. Iatrides, *Ambassador MacVeagh Reports: Greece, 1933-1947*, p. 450.

3. National Archives of the United States, Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs O.P.D. 311.23 CAD (Section X) Cases 533-586. Telegram by general Marshall to general Royce of March 3, 1944. See the memo for the records attached to this telegram by general Hilldring.

4. *Ibid.*

5. «American participation of Civil Affairs in the Balkans is limited under present decisions to procurement and shipment of supplies in connection with distribution. Understood that your general scheme is being taken to London for approval.» *Ibid.* Directive to general Wilson of March 4 from FREEDOM.

one who would have been in charge of the forthcoming British operations in the Balkans had, in pursuance of the standard British policies, asked the Joint Chiefs of Staff to consent that the civil affairs of the Balkans area be of an allied character. Not departing from the established policies as set by the War Department in the earlier inquiries of the British Foreign Office, the Joint Chiefs of Staff disapproved the Supreme Allied Commander's request. Repeating that the function of the U.S. army would be limited in the distribution of relief supplies by a supervisory personnel of not more than twenty-five officers, it was let it be known that the task of post war reconstruction of the Balkans was not a contemplated function of the United States<sup>1</sup>. Instead, it was pointed that the burden for the civil rehabilitation of the area had been assigned to UNRRA.

Underlining that it was rather a matter of national policy than simply a military one the Joint Chiefs of Staff forewarned that no American troops would be used in operations in the Balkans. Furthermore, the contingent of the twenty five officers would have supervisory duties and would not be used in the actual physical distribution of the material. As far as Greece was concerned the plan drawn on February 1944 to implement those policies provided that the supplies would be delivered to ten selected ports of the country to the Greeks who would be given assistance if necessary for their distribution<sup>2</sup>. The function of the allied Military Liaison would be to act as observers to see that distribution of the supplies was carried on «an equitable basis.»

British relentless attempts to involve the United States in their schemes on Greece reached a new high in the last part of May 1944 following the Lebanon Conference of the last week of May. Arranged ostensibly, under the auspices of the Greek government of Papandreou but under the firm hand of Mr. Leeper<sup>3</sup> to such an extent «that even

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1. *Ibid. National Policy* 1. «The post war burden of reconstruction of the Balkans is not a natural task of the United States. However, it has been decided on the highest level that U.S. will participate in relief and rehabilitation operations in the Balkans to a limited extent.» War Department, General Staff, Operations Division, March 9, 1944.

2. *Ibid.*

3. «The leftists blamed the failure to attain harmony on the hostility of Mr. Leeper, whose manipulations during and after the conference were conspicuous. One instance which was particularly shocking to all Greek opinion was the treatment accorded to the universally respected publicist Lambiakis (sic), who had always been an ardent Anglophile, when he attempted to attend the Lebanon conference.» *Ibid.*, R & A Reports, No. 2818, British Policy toward Greece 1941-1944, p. 22. See

the Greek conservatives began to resent it), the Lebanon conference was convoked in an attempt to form a unity government. The delegates were to represent all Greek political parties but the British goal was to isolate the EAM and deal a blow against it by discrediting it as obstructing the efforts of all Greeks for a national government and as intending to establish a dictatorship of its own.

The left had made every possible concession at the conference to arrive at a fair political solution, so much so as to be oblivious to the most recent British interventions in Egypt amongst the Greek armed forces there. However, its compromisal attitude was ignored. Papandreou riding high on British backing<sup>1</sup> was able to nullify whatever was achieved at the conference thus seeding the seeds for the incoming civil war in Greece. What emerged from the Beirut conference was a hybrid solution, artificially setting the vexed Greek situation while in essence was providing a legal mantle to the British-Papandreou designs on Greece:

It has been understood, for instance (but not stipulated, for reasons of courtesy), that Papandreou should relinquish the premiership, that political attacks on EAM should cease, that ELAS should be recognized as the national army, that the Security Battalions should be condemned, and that the EAM should receive a certain number of portfolios in a cabinet whose total strength was to be limited. None of these expectations was realized<sup>2</sup>.

also the following from a report of the OSS: «Lambrakis is said to have declared in Smyrna that he was not coming as a politician. He is being kept in the usual way at Aleppo. Venizelos and Exindaris intervened with Leeper for permission for him to come to Beirut, which Leeper refused on the grounds that he is not a delegate. It is suspected that Mr. Leeper was influenced in this by Papandreou because Lambrakis might have considerable influence with some of the delegates, and that influence might be directed against Papandreou. The delegates feel that at least he should be permitted to proceed to Cairo or Jerusalem, where he could have accommodations suitable to one of his age and standing.» *Ibid.* OSS doc. no. 75, 158 of May 23, 1944, p. 2.

1. That Papandreou was completely and unequivocally a conscientious advocate of the British interests to the degree of being more British than the English is corroborated in many a ways. The study quoted above on the British policy toward Greece 1941-1944 had this to say about Papandreou: «The charge of complete subservience to the British, made against Papandreou as early as the period of the Lebanon Conference, was supported on numerous later occasions». *Ibid.*, p. 22.

2. *Ibid.*

Utter failure as the Lebanon Conference was, since neither Papandreou's government was universally accepted nor EAM's predominance in Greece was shaken, while the outcry with the intervention of the British was growing even amongst Britain's stoutest supporters<sup>1</sup>, necessitated a bold movement by London. The issue could no longer be decided by diplomacy alone or by the means so far used. Coersion applied against the Greek politicians in exile, a British financed and fomented civil war in Greece and the brute force exercised to subdue the Greek armed forces in the Middle East, under the operational and administrative command of the British, had not any appreciative effect on the main barrier of British expansionism in Greece the EAM.

Britain very well realized that the issue was to be decided in Greece. Unrestricted diplomatic coersion and military bludgeoning needed be applied to break EAM and to maintain on Greek soil a «friendly» government of the type of Papandreou's. Its legal authority to act unilaterally in a direct way in the internal affairs of a sovereign nation was at least questionable even the war conditions and the jurisdiction Britain exercised in the Mediterranean war zone. To rectify that Churchill sought to have the other two allied governments acknowledge Britain's special position there and grant her an unquestionable mandate to deal with the Greek «problem» as she saw fit.

The last rejection by Molotov<sup>2</sup> had not inhibited Churchill from addressing himself to the Soviets seeking to lure them to collaborate with his plans on Greece. The trap for the Soviets was Rumania, a country already occupied by the Russian army which the British would have been willing to see falling under Soviet influence if simultaneously Moscow would raise no objection to Britain's running the Greek affairs at will. Coaching it in terms of a purely war time agreement London was confident that a military intervention in the turbulent times of the German withdrawal could easily be concealed under the exigencies of enforcing law and order in a war ridden country<sup>3</sup>.

The Soviet ambassador at London to whom Churchill's offer was-

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1. See a characteristic remark by Mr. MacVeagh: «Leeper has been at a hotel in the Lebanon, seeing the delegates who have called on him and talking to the press. To this last he continues to emphasize that the conference is purely Greek and that he is not «interfering.» What is the Greek for *eye wash*? It must be heard quite frequently in Beirut these days...» Iatrides, *Ambassador MacVeagh Reports: Greece, 1933-1947*, p. 521.

2. Barker, *Churchill and Eden at War*, p. 277.

3. National Archives of the United States, *Department of State*, 870.00 /6-3044, Prime Minister to President telg. 687 of May 31, 1944.

conveyed by Eden on May 18th, 1944<sup>1</sup>, informed the Foreign Secretary that the Soviet government «agreed with this suggestion but before giving any final assurance in the matter they would like to know whether we had consulted the United States Government and whether the latter had also agreed to this arrangement»<sup>2</sup>. Moscow's apparent reluctance to «play ball» with Britain over Greece, since there was nothing that Britain could reciprocate with in Rumania, stemmed probably from her belief that an association with the United States could have harnessed the unsatiable British demands. Possibly, also a direct exposure of the United States in the power play in the Balkans could have greatly limited the future role of Britain in her possible attempts to create an anti-Soviet zone in the area.

To forestall an American reluctance and to butter American susceptibilities Churchill assured the president that the arrangement over Greece did not imply any wish on Britain's part to «carve the Balkans into spheres of influence.» That the rights and the responsibilities of the United States would not be impaired by any such settlement. What Churchill was aiming at was the prevention on any divergence of policy between the Anglo-Americans and the Soviets, in other words the Moscow's approval of the British right to shape post war Greece.

A day earlier in accordance with instructions from the Foreign Office the British embassy in Washington had raised exactly the same points with the State Department. Clarifying a step further their intentions, the Foreign Office disclosed that the Greek affairs would be the main concern of Britain, departing from Churchill's message to Roosevelt that Britain would have been the leading power, thus admitting that other in-

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1. Pedersen in his doctoral thesis, *Focal Point of Conflict: The United States and Greece, 1943-1947*, unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1974, writes that: «On May 18, Antony Eden, the British Foreign Secretary, suggested to the Russian Ambassador that increasingly divergent Soviet and British Balkan policies called for clarification... The Soviet Ambassador demurred, cautioning that the United States would have first to be consulted.» *Ibid*, p. 82. This is a cardinal oversight on the part of Mr. Pedersen since as it can easily be deduced from Churchill's telegram to Roosevelt that Eden had seen days before the Soviet ambassador who at that time, May 18th, had communicated to Eden the decisions of the Soviet government transmitted to him in London for that very purpose. Stephen G. Xydis writing eleven whole years before Mr. Pedersen is explicit on the matter giving May 4, 1944, as the day when Eden's proposals were communicated to the Soviet ambassador in London. Stephen Xydis, *Greece and the Great Powers 1944-1947*, Thessaloniki, 1963, p. 43.

2. National Archives of the United States, *Department of State*, 870.00/6-3044. Prime Minister to President telg. 687 of May 31, 1944.

fluences could be permitted. Justifying it again as a practical war time arrangement it reasoned that due to its nature it would not have prejudiced the interests of the United States.

Basing its arguments that such an arrangement would instead of eliminating augment the divergence of views of the British and Soviet governments and would inevitably lead to a division of the region into spheres of interest, the State Department rejected the proposed arrangements<sup>1</sup>. And indirectly criticising and questioning the British right to consider areas in the Balkans as its own it suggested instead that the Balkan issue should be approached along the lines of collaboration rather than independent action.

Before the memorandum to the British ambassador Lord Halifax had been delivered, the Acting Secretary of State E.R. Stettinius had warned president Roosevelt that the proposed agreement in essence amounted to the establishment of spheres of influence. The arrangement, according to the State Department would have endangered the whole concept of joint participation and joint responsibility of the allied powers and would have set a precedent for similar claims.

On these premises the position of president Roosevelt could not be but negative to the British manoeuvre. Briefly reviewing Churchill's proposal the president emphasized the fact that such an arrangement would contribute to the differences of Britain and the Soviet Union instead of alleviating them turning the Balkans into specific spheres of influence<sup>2</sup>. President Roosevelt reverting to the views of the State Department suggested the creation of a consultative machinery, where, of course, the United States would play a primary role, which would act on the basis on agreements reached by the three powers rather than by a single state. Such a scheme, if it was to be adopted, would have nullified the British policy in Greece, preventing the former from directing the Greek affairs as her own exclusive domain<sup>3</sup>.

The last point was not missed by Churchill who on a rather lengthy expose of the British views cabled immediately on the next day of receiving Roosevelt's rebuffal, rejecting it out of hand. Reaveiling his true intentions and simultaneously shedding light into his role<sup>4</sup> in the

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1. *Ibid.* 870.00/46. Memorandum by the Department of State to the British embassy in Washington of June 12, 1944.

2. *Ibid.* 870.00/6-3044. President Roosevelt to Prime Minister telg. 557 of June 11, 1944.

3. *Ibid.*

4. *Ibid.* Prime Minister to President Roosevelt telg. 700 of June 11, 1944.

last Greek uprising, Churchill expounded on the doctrine of individual intervention rather than on the collective responsibility ideas of Roosevelt. He wanted the delegation to Britain of the exclusive authority on Greek affairs so as to be able to contain EAM-ELAS. «The Russians are ready to let us take the lead in the Greek business, which means that EAM and all its malice can be controlled by the national forces of Greece.»<sup>1</sup>

That the civil war was increasingly becoming an alarming reality by the application of the frantic measures of the British authorities was evident by the reorganization of the Greek armed forces undertaken by the British throughout the Middle East. Both American and Greek sources are in agreement about the systematic recruitment in the Greek armed forces of former Security Battalion men who had found their way to the Middle East. There, catered by the British, despite individual protestations by republican officers<sup>2</sup>, they were incorporated into the purged Greek armed forces whose composition then reflected a vicious anti-EAM sentiment and a self-motivated desire to have the EAM crushed.

Those then were the Greek national forces which according to Churchill would have controlled the EAM and all its malice. Churchill's pragmatism and unscrupulousness surfaced in that telegram to President Roosevelt when the British prime minister arrogantly based his country's claims on Greece on the high casualties suffered by the English expeditionary force in Greece in 1941. In essence the country, Greece, owed to the British the right they claimed to determine its future since Britain had fought on her soil the Germans. Pleading with Roosevelt that he should trust him, «I always reported to you and I always will report to

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1. *Ibid.*

2. *Ibid.* «The British are trying to create strong pro-British Greek armed forces, and for the purpose they are recruiting former members of the Security Battalions and the Special Police, and other Quisling and reactionary elements. The purpose of this is to have a strong Greek force on which they can depend for whatever they might try later.» doc. no. L 49839 of November 23, 1944. See also a memorandum to the Greek General Staff by the naval lieutenant commander John Melissinos, Greek representative on the inter-allied subcommittee of displaced persons who vehemently protested to the general staff that the Greek Brigade enlisted *en masse* former members of the Security Battalions who had landed in Italy to avoid reprisals in Greece when the Germans began to withdraw. Melissinos Archive, *Vasilikon Nautikon*, vol. III, doc. II/1472 of October 13, 1944. The aforementioned archive has been given to me by his widow Mrs. Henriette Melissinos. Hereafter it would be cited as Melissinos Archive, *Vasilikon Nautikon*.

you», Churchill modified now his overall plan limiting the time allocation for the success of the project to three months<sup>1</sup>.

It was this last provision which finally persuaded president Roosevelt to make a personal commitment to the British proposals, warning simultaneously Churchill that this endorsement was not necessarily an American *carte blanc* for the establishment of a British sphere of influence in the area<sup>2</sup>. To this Churchill ostensibly was in agreement but with a very important reservation. If the issue of the spheres of influence was to be shelved at Roosevelt's insistence, the British prime minister was of the opinion that the measure should be of a temporary nature. He was thoroughly convinced that the post-war Europe, at least, should be assigned to spheres of influence. In that way Britain would have retained her predominance in the traditional areas of vital interest to her, Balkans and the Mediterranean, and above all safeguarded it from the onslaught of the socialist oriented indigenous movements. The spectre of the emerging Soviet power in Europe an undisputable ally, and ideological mentor of the revolutionary movements, made the more urgent that division if Europe was to return to, the old *status quo*<sup>3</sup>.

The State Department was in total ignorance of the presidential consent so much so that the modified British proposals to Roosevelt had been officially communicated to Hull by Lord Halifax on June 15th, three whole days following Roosevelt's message to Churchill<sup>4</sup>. Not so with the British services which as soon as the American commitment was fetched had communicated it to Mr. Leeper in Cairo. British activities in the Middle East were immediately influenced by these developments the latter acting as the sole arbiters of the Greek affairs. American ambassador Mr. MacVeagh became a privy to this triumph of the British diplomacy not through the State Department but rather by the exuberant British ambassador in Cairo<sup>5</sup>. It was MacVeagh's puzzled in

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1. National Archives of the United States, *Department of State*, 870.00/6-3044. Prime Minister to President telg. 700 of June 11, 1944.

2. *Ibid.* President to Prime Minister telg. 560 of June 12, 1944.

3. «I have asked the Foreign Secretary to convey the information to Monsieur Molotov and to make clear that the reason for the three months limit is in order that we should not prejudge the question of establishing post-war spheres of influence.» *Ibid.* Prime Minister to President telg. 703 of June 14, 1944.

4. *Ibid.* RG 218, Records of the United States Joint Chiefs of Staff, Leahy File 139. Letter of Mr. Hull to the President of June 29, 1944.

5. «My British colleague has recently several times spoken to me of a proposal for what he called a «purely practical war time agreement» between the British and



quiry at his superiors at the State Department when the news of the agreement were relayed to him by Leeper that prompted Mr. Hull to appeal directly to the President to seek a clarification:

I should be grateful if you would let me know what changes have been made in our position, in order that appropriate instructions, in amendment of the telegrams already despatched, can be sent to Mr. MacVeagh and the other Chiefs of Mission dealing with these questions<sup>1</sup>.

However, even before these reactions president Roosevelt was lukewarm about the means used by Churchill especially resenting the fact that he had been informed only after the British had contacted the Russians and then only at the Soviet's insistence. He was disturbed enough to emphasize to Churchill that anything of this nature should be avoided in the future<sup>2</sup>. The apologetic tone of the British prime minister to the presidential displeasure did not prevent Churchill from revealing the projected British intervention and the dismal situation of their proteges in Greece. If «things were left on their own», the abdication of the king would have been a matter of time. Comparing the expansion of the power of the EAM to a rule of terror and reign of anarchy in the Greek country-side, Churchill justified the existence and formation of the infamous Security Battalions on the repression exercised by the EAM. A view which already was ripe among the British services which more or less were adopting the attitude that those quisling formations were victims of the EAM and as such meriting the support of the allies as forces on which they could depend to combat EAM-ELAS.

No rift, of course, in the relations of the two allied statesmen was to arise over the issue of the British arrogance in disregarding Roosevelt in the Soviet-British carving of the Balkans. Roosevelt's counsel for «accord over questions bearing on our Allied war effort»<sup>3</sup>, were, un-

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Russian Governments whereby the latter would take the lead in Rumania; the former in Greek affairs. This, arrangement, he said, would provide for British support of Russian initiative in Rumania and Russian support of British initiative in Greece...» *Ibid.* Telegram by MacVeagh to the State Department, Mr. Hull, of June 26, 1944.

1. *Ibid.* Letter of Mr. Hull to the President of June 29, 1944.

2. *Ibid.* *Department of State*, 870.00/6-3044. President to Prime Minister telg 565 of June 22, 1944.

3. *Ibid.* President to Prime Minister telg. 570 of June 26, 1944.

der the circumstances, at least unrealistic. British policies in the summer of 1944 were characterized by an over intense campaign to bring EAM to its knees. Using primarily the office of the prime minister Papandreou<sup>1</sup> it succeeded in blocking all political solutions to the crisis. In that effort besides Papandreou the British counted on the hearty support of other Greek politicians of the same persuasion like the Greek prime minister. The American consul - general Burton Y. Berry in Istanbul summed up the *raison d'être* of the Greek politicians who flocked to the cause of the British identifying their own political existence with the establishment of British influence in Greece:

...the writer believes... that though it is unlikely that communism will be acceptable in Greece, the demand for social and economic reform will be very insistent. Conversations with the various political leaders give the impression that most of these men are either concerned chiefly with the affairs of parties, some of which probably exist only in name, or with denunciation of the andartes. One cannot help wondering to what extent the political leaders represent public opinion and what they hope they offer for constructive leadership in post-war Greece<sup>2</sup>.

Consciously, if not fanatically the traditional leadership of the political parties alligned with the British aiding the latter in all effort to dismantle the EAM<sup>3</sup>. The implementation of the decisions reached at

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1. «Distrust of Papandreou was apparently the sole hindrance to the formation of the unity government during July. On August 3 the Committee in the mountains (PEEA) made Papandreou's resignation their sole condition for entering the government. Mr. Leeper, however, instructed Papandreou not to resign.» *Ibid.* R & A Reports, No. 2818, British Policy toward Greece 1941-1944, pp. 22-23.

2. Exerts from a report entitled «Views of Mr. Themistocles Tsatsos on EAM and the Political Situation in Greece», of June 1, 1944. It is of interest to note that according to the American diplomat of all the political leaders «who have passed through Izmir, with the exception of Sofianopoulos and Lambrakis», were anti-EAM like Tsatsos. *Ibid.* Report of Berry, to the State Department of June 1, 1944.

3. *Ibid.* See also a characteristic telegram from the USAFIME to the War Department of the methods and means used by the British to harass the EAM and to wreck all efforts for national unity, thus assigning the blame to EAM as harboring visions of establishing a dictatorship of its own in Greece; «Original message delivered to Cairo government from Svolos offering to participate provided Papandreou resigned was substantially delayed apparently by British diplomats and possibly would not have been delivered had not the OSS had a copy of this message since same was transmitted in code of U.S.» *Ibid.* Records of the War Department, General and Special Staffs. O.P.D. 336 Security II.

Lebanon which alone could have prevented a civil war was not only constantly ignored but maliciously perverted so as to incite EAM's leadership into adopting an uncompromising attitude which could have permitted the denunciation of the EAM. In all this Papandreou enjoying the ever present support of Leeper was acting as a one man government consulting with the British and deciding on their advice on the fate of Greece without informing his cabinet<sup>1</sup>. It was in pursuance of such a policy that Papandreou arbitrarily at Churchill's «suggestion» moved the seat of the Greek government from Cairo to a tiny city in Italy, Casserta. There, the measures to prevent coming of EAM to power became the order of the day. The augmentation of the EAM's opponents increased. Both the British and the Papandreou government, while keeping thousands of seasoned troops in concentration camps in Africa, augmented with all means at their disposal both overtly and covertly EAM's only opponents EDES and the Security Battalions.

In the war unleashed against the EAM all means possible were employed by the British to exert pressure on the former. In the middle of July 1944, the OSS's office in Cairo was informed by the British that they were going to evacuate their mission from Greece in support of Papandreou, if the Greek prime minister «judged» necessary to denounce EAM/ELAS. Furthermore, it was the opinion of general Donovan that the British just so as to exert greater pressure they would have required the Americans to withdraw their mission at the same time<sup>2</sup>. Identification of the American mission in Greece, whose relations *vis a vis* the EAM-ELAS were more that cordial<sup>3</sup>, with the British interests

1. «Papandreou's treatment of his cabinet is further illustrated by his failure to inform any of them when he departed to consult with Mr. Churchill in the latter half of the summer.» *Ibid.* R & A Reports, No. 2818, British Policy toward Greece 1941-1944, p. 23. Of interest is also this view of Papandreou of the significance of the EAM: «EAM wants to retain a *class* army; the Government insists on a national army. EAM is not a true expression of the policy of the coming social democratic world. The coming world struggle is between Pan-Slavism and the Anglo-Saxons. Anglo-American policy must carry responsibility for its acts.» *Ibid.* RG 226, Records of the Office of Strategic Services 88568. Report of the Intelligence Division of the American forces in the Middle East to Washington of August 2, 1944, based on a personal interview of captain T.A. Thornton head of the naval intelligence Middle East.

2. See the pertinent reports and memorandums by general Donovan to Secretary Hull and his response as well as the papers exchanged on the subject with the Joint Chiefs of Staff. *Ibid.* Office of Strategic Services. Memorandum by general Donovan to the Secretary of State of July 17, 1944.

3. See the work of Kostas Kouvaras, *O.S.S. me ten Kentrike tou E.A.M.*, Ath-

would have jeopardized its presence there. A greater damage, of course, would have been made to the overall American interests in Greece if the Americans were to become a tug of war of the British. That was the essence of an urgent message sent to the Secretary of State by general Donovan, where the head of the OSS was advising that no such policy be followed in Greece even if the British were to ask the Americans.

Both the State Department and the Joint Chiefs of Staff concurred with OSS's projected role in Greece if and when the British were to leave the country, American interests were to be best served by the continuity of the American presence in the land rather than by becoming identified with the British policies. This divergence in the handling of the Greek situation was of fundamental significance emphasizing the unwillingness of the American agencies dealing with the Greek affairs to lend their support to the British schemes<sup>1</sup>.

In this spirit of distrust of the British motives and the fear of an American involvement in a purely British operation, not advancing allied or even American aims and interests must be seen the reluctance of the American military to lend any substantial support to the contemplated British operation for the liberation of Greece. The American military participation was to be limited to relief and rehabilitation projects. It would also be for a defined period of time and the most important of all as it was explicitly underlined such an agreement would have to be drafted in such a way as to be acceptable not only to the Papandreou government but also «to any successor government»<sup>2</sup>.

Those reservations were to be fully implemented in the agreement between the United States government and the Greek government where officially was declared:

The Government of the United States desires to associate itself with the «Memorandum of Agreement Regarding Questions Concerning Civil Administration, Jurisdiction, and Relief Arising out of operations in Greek Territory of a Military

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ens, 1976. Mr. Kouvaras, a Greek-American, was one of the OSS's agents that had been sent to Greece.

1. Again here it should be emphasized that all American agencies in the Middle East up to this time, while recognizing the communistic orientation of the EAM, nevertheless were steadfastly against the British machinations to discredit it, realizing the ulterior motives of the British and the genuineness of the resistance movement.

2. National Archives of the United States, National Security Council, C.C.A.C. 131/1 of September 13, 1944.

Force» of... between the British Government and the Greek Government, but only for the purposes and to the extent specified in the preceding paragraph<sup>1</sup>.

In a subsequent directive the Joint Chiefs of Staff restricted further the participation of American personnel and the extent of their authority in the contemplated British operation in Greece<sup>2</sup>.

EAM's leadership in a perplexed way, if not rather consciously, aided the British efforts to bring under the sway of London the revolution in Greece and to bound it legally to a controlled behavior. The so-called Lebanon agreement by which the EAM was obliged to forego significant part of its proclaimed aims was followed by another folly. EAM having since the beginning of September 1944, fully participated in the Papandreou cabinet with six ministers of its own, in the middle of that month entered into an agreement with the British by which it gave the latter the legal basis for the occupation of the country by the British troops. A corollary to this agreement which is known as the Caserta Agreement was the authority delegated by the EAM to the British to establish law and order in the country<sup>3</sup>. A detailed agreement, it provided that the supreme authority in the Athens region should be vested with the British general Scobie who was the designed leader of the British expeditionary forces in Greece. The Caserta agreement heralded the surrendering EAM's military forces, the acceptance of the authority of the Greek government of Papandreou, and the paramount authority of the British military forces in the determination of the course of Greece's policies. The independence of the indigenous forces was severely compromised. Their effectiveness and role playing in the evolution of policy in accordance with their aims was for all intents and purposes severely limited and their legal bargaining power nullified. The Caserta Agreement paved the way for the British landing in Greece which took

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1. *Ibid.* RG 165, Records of the War Department, General and Special Staffs. OPD 336 Greece (Sec. I). A letter to Secretary Hull by the chief of staff of the commander of the army and Navy admiral Leahy of October 12, 1944.

2. *Ibid.* RG 165, Records of the War Department, General and Special Staffs. OPD. 014.1 TS II. Telegram by the War Department to the American Headquarters Middle East, of July 7, 1944.

3. See the attached in the appendix A text of the Caserta Agreement. Of course, the maintenance of law and order was questioned by the EAM. A direct clause at the EAM's insistence was omitted from the text of the agreement. However, articles one and two of the agreement infer such an authority to the commander of the British forces general Scobie.

place in the first days of October 1944.

Notwithstanding, the compromisal attitude of the EAM the British and their allies continued to exert all kinds of pressure to undermine EAM's strength. While there was now a functioning government of national unity under the premiership of the British appointee Papandreou the British undertook a new campaign to persuade the Soviets to renew their mandate on Greece. On October 9, 1944, Churchill in a meeting with Stalin in Moscow struck a new agreement over Greece. Of three months duration like the previous one, the new arrangement, «an informal understanding»<sup>1</sup> went quite further than the previous one in the rights it accorded to the British. They could use their military might to «quell internal disorders» if they judged it necessary and the Soviets would not interfere.

Active British military intervention had now, as far as the British were perceiving it, the sanction of one of the great powers which more than any other could have effectively blocked it. *Operation Manna*, the code name for the British landing in Greece was beginning under the most ominous circumstances. The armed clash with the EAM, should the latter not wholly capitulate was a certainty. The first British troops, no Greek troops were allowed to land with the first contingents of the British that came ashore<sup>2</sup>, found the entire Greece virtually under the control of the EAM.

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1. National Archives of the United States, National Security Council, *The British Probable Position in Greece*, p. 7. See also two works mentioned previously that of Pedersen and Xydis. Both of these authors, especially the last one while assigning immense importance to the understanding reached at Moscow, do not mention the key clause in that understanding that the Soviet Union had tacitly concented to the use of military power on the part of the British to put down any «disorders» by the EAM if she thought it necessary. Two authors of the left, the communist Bartziotas and the so-called Eurocommunist revisionist Chatzis attempt to refute the validity of the Anglo-Russian understanding with the method of semantics. Bartziotas bases his arguments that the Soviet Union was not to be blamed for the intervention of the British in Greece in December of 1944 on the fact that Moscow had only concented to the British mopup operations against the Germans and nothing more. B. Bartziotas, *Ethnike Antistasi kai Dekembres 1944*, Athens, 1979, pp. 94-201. Chatzis is more confusing and perplexing than Bartziotas claiming that Stalin was not at all aware of Churchill's intentions. Th. Chatzis, *He Nikefora Epastase pou Chatheke*, Athens, 1979, pp. 23-25.

2. On that it is worth seeing the works of P. Kanellopoulos, *Hemerologio*, Athens, 1977, pp. 645-655. Reading the work of Kanellopoulos one can draw the conclusion that the entire country was wild in its enthusiasm for the EAM the later enjoying the overwhelming support of the rank and file of the Greek people. The other work by admiral Toumbas, an arch-conservative and a person which was in-

The British paratroopers and the infantry landed in Peloponnese, a few hundred at the most, were aided in their advance behind the orderly retreating Germans by the ELAS. The entire Greek country-side was alive and functioning under the new state apparatus molded by the EAM. The Britishers were given a genuine welcome by all «classes of the population», and were afforded every courtesy by the official EAM in Athens. This *mondus vivendi* was gradually and systematically retrogressed into an open hostility as the rank and file of the Eamites came to realize that they were facing a second occupation far more serious in its consequence than the German one.

Already, the discredited right had hailed the landing of the British not only as liberators from the German occupation but essentially as the only force which could break the power of the EAM. The British further were perceived by EAM's opposition as the political allies which could be trusted to build the power of the right. The political survival of all the forces whose common bond was their opposition to EAM was identified with the success of the British forces to purge the country from the power of the EAM. On the other hand to the left it was a threat of far more serious consequences than the German occupation. The British were to establish in power the conservative right and the monarchy thus effectively obliterating all the achievements contributed by the EAM and all the necessary reforms envisioned in the Greek society, reducing the country to a stagnate backward status. In the realm of foreign policy such an event would have made more pronounced the dependence of the conservative forces on the British, consequently reducing the country to a mandate of a great power.

While the legal foundation for the presence of British troops in Greece after the withdraw of the Germans was in an extremely shaky ground<sup>1</sup> the British government through its political and military repre-

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strumental in the smashing of the mutiny in the Navy in 1944, and who was the chief of the Greek flotilla of destroyers that came along with the British in the operation *Manna*, provides a similar picture of Greece despite the great indignation of the author against everything that was not «nationalistic». J. Toumbas, *Echthros en Opsei*, Athens, 1954, pp. 558-559.

1. A great deal of the blame for the even questionable authority of the British must be assigned to the EAM and its leadership. Left historiography of today while recognizes that it does not offer a logical explanation for the actions of EAM's leadership. Bartziotas, *Ethnike Antistasi kai Dekembres 1944*, pp. 210-211; Chatzis, *He Nikefora Epanastase pou Chatheke*, pp. 80-85. For a severe criticism of the leadership of the communist party for its capitulation to the British see the work of the Secretary of the Albanian Communist Party Enver Hoxha, *With Stalin*, Tirana, 1979, p. 111.

sentatives in Greece in the fall of 1944 government the country as a mandate territory. Upholding that authority general Scobie on December 1, 1944, declared that the continued presence of the British troops in the liberated territory was «to help the Greek people restore their prosperity by establishing the authority of the lawful government throughout Greece»<sup>1</sup>. Such an unambiguous statement of policy was, but smacking of authority far beyond the usual power of an allied liberating army.

The ground was meticulously prepared for such an assault, in fields others than the legal ones. Three institutions were foremost the foundations of the British power in Greece. The army, the police and the Security Battalions became the pillars on which the British policy relied to enforce its aims on Greece.

SAN in the fall of 1944 was in control of the land armed forces, which were being greatly reinforced by an ever increasing number of Security Battalion personnel and other stranglers of quisling nationalist formations. Members of the former upon the arrival of the British had been released from the Averoff prison, and having been outfitted with Greek army uniforms were enlisted in the Mountain Brigade and other «nationalist» military units<sup>2</sup>. Army leadership was in the hands of the so-called «Three L's,» general Liosis, colonel Laios and colonel Lamaris, along with general Ventiris and the notorious general Spiliotopoulos<sup>3</sup>, who had been given these positions because of their loyalty to the monarchy and the British. The left was correct in asserting that the new army which had been created after the revolution of April 1944 was in fact a praetorian guard in the service of the monarchy and the British.

In the police forces the anti-EAM mentality was much more pronounced than in the armed forces. The collaboration of the rural police, the Gendarmerie with the Germans and the Italians was as complete as it was that of the Security Battalions. So much so that Papandreou bowing to the general outcry against the compromised security forces had to declare on October 1944 that the Gendarmerie was to be

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1. National Archives of the United States, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, doc. no. 109258. The official text of the Caserta Agreement.

2. *Ibid.* R & A Reports No. 3745, The Role of the Army in Greek Politics, p. 13.

3. On Spiliotopoulos see the work of a conservative Greek who in association with Markezinis organized and sustained extreme right wing organizations like «X». According to Zalokostas, the author in question, Spiliotopoulos on the explicit orders of Papandreou was financing those organizations so as to use them in a conflict with EAM. C. Zalokostas, *To Chroniko tes Sklavias*, Athens, 1942, p. 254.



purged of all men that had collaborated with the Germans<sup>1</sup>. Most of the police from the provinces had moved to Athens where had been confined by the British in the Goudhi barracks, ostensibly to await for the purge process. However, they were recruited for service by the British into the newly formed National Guard, one battalion of which was made up exclusively of former Gendarmes. In the Special Security police the percentage of those that had willingly collaborated with the Germans comprised the entire force. Under the direction of the Germans they continued, as under the Metaxas regime, to combat communism and during the expansion of the EAM were the most prominent of those that challenged EAM. They too had been granted a preferential status by the British who took them under their protection and used them as a bulwark against the power of the EAM in Athens. Many of their men were also recruited by the British in the National Guard as it was done with the Gendarmes<sup>2</sup>.

Preferential treatment was above all extended to the Security Battalions and especially to their officers<sup>3</sup>. While a great number of them had been imprisoned by the EAM with the purpose to be tried for war crimes against the Greek people, the British under the pretext that they were moving them to other places of imprisonment, were enlisting them in nationalist formations, in the Mountain Brigade and in the National Guard<sup>4</sup> in particular. Other units of the Security Battalions had at the explicit order and demand of the British surrender to them as it was the case with Papadagonas in Peloponnese. Moved to Athens they also were inducted into the Mountain Brigade<sup>5</sup>.

The same method was used by the British with the other «nationalist» organizations prominent among which was the «X». The so-called «Xites» according to their leader colonel Grivas had been attacking the EAM since September on the orders of the Papandreou government.

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1. National Archives of the United States, Department of State, R & A Reports No. 2939, The Role of the Police in Greek Politics, p. 12.

2. «The British are trying to create strong pro-British armed Greek forces and for the purpose they are recruiting former members of the Security Battalions and the Special Police, and other Quislings and reactionary elements.» *Ibid.* RG 226, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, doc. no. 49839 of December 8, 1944.

3. Kanellopoulos, *Hemerologio*, pp. 654-659.

4. National Archives of the United States, *Department of State*, R & A Reports, British Policy toward Greece 1941-1944, annex vii, p. 52.

5. *Ibid.* «According to one reliable report, the great majority of the officers inducted into the new National Guard (Ethnofilaki) were also from the Security Battalions or were ex-Metaxists or royalists.»

Papandreou's military representative in Athens general Spiliotopoulos was supplying «X» with arms and automatic weapons<sup>1</sup>. As Grivas was stating to American sources he was on direct orders by the Greek government to prevent the «communists» from gaining control of Athens<sup>2</sup>. At the same time Spiliotopoulos enlisted the members of the «X» organization into the National guard, the «Xites» comprising the 1st infantry regiment. Similar methods were used with the collaborationist organization PAO in Macedonia and the organization of Tsaousanton whom the British took under their protection. It was through their intervention that an agreement was signed between general Siraroff, commander of the 2nd Bulgarian army corps and Tsaousanton according to which it was agreed not to attack each other and to fight «any expansion of ELAS in the territory controlled by them»<sup>3</sup>.

Expansion of the Greek government's forces even at the extent undertaken was judged insufficient if those forces were to face the ELAS. The EAM ELAS could have easily dispersed those rightist formations and the limited British units. The realization that the British could not depend on the «loyal» Greeks alone prompted them to begin a rush program of reinforcing their army units with fresh forces from Italy. Steps were also instituted by the British and Papandreou to disband the ELAS contrary to the decisions of the Lebanon Conference. For at that meeting the EAM delegates had concented that the Greek armed forces to be created by new government should incorporate all the existing forces ELAS included.

Nevertheless, on November 10, 1944, Papandreou on the instigation of general Scobie, and without consulting the cabinet, and of course, ignoring the EAM's leadership, announced that the guerilla bands EAM and EDES would be disbanded by December 10<sup>4</sup>. At the same

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1. Zalokostas, *To Chroniko tes Sklavias*, p. 254.

2. National Archives of the United States, *Department of State*, R& A Report, British Policy toward Greece 1941-1944, annex vii, p. 53.

3 «In Macedonia, as a result of the intervention of British officers, an agreement was signed on 18 Sept. between Siraroff, commander of the 2nd Bulgarian Army Corps, and Greek pro-fascist groups under Tsaousanton. It was agreed not to attack each other, and to fight against any expansion of ELAS in the territory controlled by them.» *Ibid.* RG 226, Records of the Office of Strategic Services doc. no. L 47690.

4. *Ibid.* doc. no. 103659. There also are numerous Greek sources testifying to the role played by Papandreou on this issue. The almost mercenary character of the other Greek organization the EDES is upheld by these comments of British military officers in Greece: «General Zervas is 100% cooperative, and that he has

period the British, general Scobie being a prime example of it, treated the EAM members of the Papandreou cabinet in what was described as an «exceedingly high handed» manner. Scobie was threatening that if his demands were not met he would proceed to institute a change of government. The head of the British armed forces according to an American representative in Athens at the time was not only ardently and openly anti-EAM «but would like nothing better than to cause the disruption of the organization»<sup>1</sup>.

The impending crisis in Greece while ostensibly was to be attributed to the EAM and the Greek communist party for having not acquiescing with the dictations of the «national government», it was methodically planned by the British. Indeed, general Scobie acting on the specific instructions of Churchill ordered the outright disbandment of the ELAS and EDES while assuring Papandreou that he would make use of his armed forces to repel any attacks by the EAM. Scobie's action of virtually assuming the reins of the government in Athens provoked the resignation of the six EAM members of the government thus blowing to pieces whatever semblance of unity there existed and opening widely the opportunity for the much talked and methodically prepared armed clash.

Notwithstanding, the expressed willingness of the Eamic leadership for a compromise solution<sup>2</sup> the provocative actions of the Greek police and the private «nationalist» organizations precipitated a full scale warfare where the British army came to play the leading role as the main combatant against the EAM. Unprepared and with no preconceived plan to face the British and their Greek puppet Papandreou the EAM and the Greek communist party followed a haphazard policy of attempting to placate the British with offers of a truce or a compromise solution to the crisis. Throughout the fighting in the area of Attica, essentially in the city of Athens and Piraeus, during the month of December there were numerous attempts undertaken by the EAM to reach a compromise with the British but to no avail. To the Eamic offers of a negotiated peace on the basis of the formation of a coalition government, the British were insisting that ELAS's forces must first

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agreed to accede to General Scobie's order that he disarm and disband his EDES forces on 10 December.» doc. no. 105852.

1. *Ibid.* R & A Reports, No 2818, British Policy toward Greece 1941-1944, p. 28.

2. Iatrides, *Ambassador MacVeagh Reports: Greece, 1933-1947*, p. 651. The entry to the ambassador's diary is November 19, 1944, only a few days prior to the outbreak of the hostilities.

evacuate Attica prior to any negotiations. Another conciliatory proposal which could have arrested the further progress of the full scale war, the appointment of a new prime minister, Sophoulis, who was a person accepted by all sides and the EAM, was vetoed by the British who rejected any such change in government. Furthermore, general Scobie had summoned Sophoulis and asked of him to lend his support to the Papandreou government only to be confronted by a statement by the octagetanian politician that in doing so he would be supporting a dictatorship<sup>1</sup>.

The deadlock in Athens in spite the immense fire power mobilized by the British continued well into December with no signs of a military victory for the British and the conglomeration of their Greek allies<sup>2</sup>. The visit of Churchill and Eden on December 25, 1944, in Athens emphasized the predicament faced by the British who became now convinced that some concessions were in order if a negotiated solution to the crisis was to be achieved. The high echelon deliberations of the British statesmen and the leadership of the EAM culminated in the temporary appointment of a regent, archbishop Damaskinos and the replacement of Papandreou by general Plasteras<sup>3</sup>. The general whose popularity had been considerable with the working class sections of the Greek capital and Piraeus, had been feched<sup>4</sup> by the British to lure away the more concervative of the EAM followers and provoke a schism within the organization. Both appointments, that of the regent and the new prime minister did not signify any change in the British policy and British determination to control Greek policy. On the contrary that was a further indication of the British perseverance to dominate Greece by the employment of whatever means available.

Whatever regrouping there was in the Greek government team it did not produce any change of mentality *vis a vis* the EAM. Certainly, to no one's astonishment Plasteras armed with his «republican» credentials denounced EAM and its adherents as traitorous rebels and was

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1. In a statement to the Americans on around November 14, 1944, Sophoulis had declared that he had considered the Papandreou government as a necessary evil because the British had imposed it on Greece. National Archives of the United States, RG 226, Records of the Office of Strategic Services doc. no. 104705.

2. The Greek Brigade and hastily mobilized units of National Guard, actually former members of the Security Battalions.

3. I. Pepones, *Nikolaos Plasteras*, 2 vols, Athens, 1948, vol. 2, pp. 656-658.

4. This was the intention of the British to use the general's prestige to break the popularity of the EAM and to create a schism within the organization.

threatening its leadership with criminal persecution. If such a policy was calculated to provoke an internal disintegration of the EAM its results were rather poor indeed if not dismal. The defection of groups such as ELD and SKE the moderate wing of the EAM was quite unimportant not affecting the strength of the organization.

Political stratagems having failed the war continued on until the British entered into a truce with the EAM. That it was to be expected since it was the British army alone which bore the brunt of the war against the EAM, the Greek formations having either been annihilated like the police and other mercenary groups, «X» amongst others, or taken refuge in British held territories like the Greek Brigade. To polarize and discredit further the EAM the British instigated a well coordinated campaign to denounce EAM as a purely communist organization. This became evident when following the military truce entered upon between general Scobie and EAM, Plasteras insisted, on good advice, of course, that the EAM negotiation team be composed of communists alone excluding any one else. So much so that Tsirimokos the representative of the ELD was not acceptable as one of the Eamic negotiators unless he declared that he was a communist.

Vengeance then rather than reconciliation dominated the intentions and the prescribed policies of the British toward the EAM. The Varkiza Agreement between the EAM and the Greek government signed in the Athenian resort on February 12, 1945, while ending the armed conflict between the British and the EAM it did not bring about peace in the land.

Cruel reprisals<sup>1</sup>, revenge, and a series of remorseless actions line the period immediately following the Varkiza Agreement<sup>2</sup>. Indeed, the peace arrangements which ended the war of the EAM with British while specifically guaranteed and upheld the right of the Eamic coalition

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1. As soon, at the heels of the British, the Greek rightist organizations, military, entered Greek towns outside Attica, there followed an orgy of wholesale arrests, maltreatment of citizenry and outright murders. American observers had the following comments on the situation: «By the end of April, 1945, the number of people imprisoned in Athens-Pireus on political grounds had attained a figure of 4,500-5,000. The total is increasing daily. Much of the searching, intimidation, etc., preparatory to the arrest of such people, is done by plain-clothes members of Chi Organization...and EDES who circulate armed with small arms, grenades, and clubs.» National Archives of the United States, *Department of State*, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, doc. no. 127650.

2. See the text of the Varkiza Agreement in a despatch by Mr. MacVeagh to the State Department of March 6, 1947. *Ibid*, doc. no. 121210.

to participate on an equal footing in the process of the reorganization of the post-civil war Greek state, were intentionally ignored and methodically violated. Instead of the purging of the civil service and the security forces, city police and the gendarmerie, which according to articles VII and VIII of the Varkiza Agreement ought to proceed with the greatest speed, a wholesale terror was unleashed against all the followers of EAM and the suspected ones<sup>1</sup>.

The advance of the British troops in the provinces from their main base in Attica was followed at close step by an assortment of pro-rightist military and paramilitary formations. Their advent signaled not the imposition of law and order of the new government of Athens but the establishment of punitive<sup>2</sup> decrees aimed at annihilating the Eamic majority of the conquered provinces. Accordingly, the Greek administrations which followed each other in 1945 plagued as they were with insoluble financial issues and with a virtual state of social unrest in the country, could only depend for their existence on continuous foreign military presence. British troops were hence deployed in Greece stationed in the country long after the end of the second world war. Greece in the immediate post war months and for that reason throughout 1945-1946 was an occupied country. Her internal political orientation and developments depended on the long range interests of the British not to overlook, of course, the complete subjugation of Greece's foreign policy to the exigencies of the new post - world war.

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1. British troops of the general Scobie's forces became the masters of Greece in the months after the Varkiza Agreement. Characteristically is the following proclamation issued by O. de T. Lovett, Brigadier, Commander of the British forces in Salonica on January 17, 1945: «British troops assisted by selected Greek civilians under my orders will carry out patrolling to maintain public order... As the representative of general Ronald Scobie... I call upon all citizens of Salonica... faithfully to carry out the instructions of the Representative of the legal Greek Government in Athens.» *Ibid*, document unnumbered.

2. Tsakalotos, *40 Chronia Stratiotes tes Hellados*, Athens, 1960, pp. 677-679.